

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

DAVID E. RICHARDSON, PLANNER
1000 CECIL G. COSTIN, SR. BLVD., ROOM 312, PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA 32456
PHONE (850) 227-9562 • FAX (850) 227-9563 • WEBSITE: www.gulfcounty-fl.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Gulf County Board of County Commissioners
From: David Richardson, Planner
For: Gulf County, Florida
NFIP Number 120098
Subject: 2009 Floodplain Management Progress Report
Date: August 25, 2009

Background

In order for a community property owner to receive insurance premium reductions for National Flood Insurance, the community must participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) program. As a condition of continued participation in the CRS program, the community is required to complete an annual recertification report and submit it to FEMA by October 1st. This memorandum is Gulf County's progress report and the process also requires this report be distributed to the media and be made available to the public. The report will also be available on the Planning Departments web page.

The Gulf County, Florida Floodplain Management Plan was adopted by the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners on September 29, 1998. Copies of the plan have been and are available for review in the Gulf County Planning Department, Room 312 and Gulf County Building Department, Room 305 located in the Robert M. Moore Administration Building. Copies for purchase are available from the Clerk of the Courts Office in the Main Court House. Both facilities are located at 1000 Cecil G. Costin, Sr. Blvd., Port St. Joe, Florida, 32456. The flood plain ordinance is posted on the Planning Departments web page.

Flood Events

From August through December 2008, Gulf County experienced flooding in August from T.S. Fay with minor damage and in December from a cold front that produced minor coastal flooding and inland river flooding. From January through July 2009, Gulf County experienced flooding in March from series of fronts and low pressure systems that caused heavy rains to fall on the river systems in Alabama, Georgia and Florida and caused local flooding into April. This event was comparable to the 2005 floods. The county suffered minor damage to 50 homes, major damage to 2 homes and several million dollars in road damage.

2009 Floodplain Management Report

Page 2 of 3

In May 2009, the county staff met with FEMA and received training on the RSDE software for damage assessment and tracking.

Floodplain Management Plan Element Review

A. Base Flood Elevation

Gulf County is continuing to require FEMA Flood Elevation Certificates for residential and commercial structures built in a flood zone. We are also enforcing the one foot freeboard as applicable to respective flood zones. There was no variances approved dealing with floodplain management.

B. Flood Mapping

On April 16, 2009, the County began enforcing the G map series. The G series was a partial map revision for the county that will replace the F series maps with the same panel numbers. So as of April 16, 2009, the Gulf County FIRM maps will have both F and G series maps.

In July of 2009, county staff met with the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD) to discuss new additional changes to the DFIRM's. The Water Management District is assisting FEMA in a restudy of coastal flooding and storm surge impacts. These changes are about 3 years out.

The LiDAR data that was that was mentioned in the previous progress report is in preliminary development and has additional technical reviews to pass before final approval and use. This new data will be used to produce more modern surge maps with greater detail and accuracy. The need to restudy the surge zones is the main funding source for the LiDAR project.

The county staff reports that they are continuing to assist the public with their NFIP mapping and insurance issues. With the present housing financial crisis, flood insurance is a major issue with homeowner mortgages.

C. Flood Protection Assistance:

The County has maintained a listing of books and pamphlets for retrofitting existing structures. The County Building Department has remained current with retrofitting issues as outlined in the action plan. FIRM Panels are available in the libraries and in the Planning Department. The Planning, GIS and Building Departments use NFIP GIS data to assist individuals in ascertaining their flood zones.

An interactive GIS based flood zone mapping is available on a web site hosted by the GIS Department. A static map is available on the Planning Department web page at www.gulfcounty-fl.gov.

D. Flood Protection Materials

Copies of various FEMA publications have been acquired and are available for public review. The County will assist the public in getting any copies they request. We have also included links to these documents on the Planning Department web page at www.gulfcounty-fl.gov.

E. Flood Warning and Preparedness

Gulf County is very sensitive to the events that affect both coastal and inland flooding. Gulf County Emergency Management Office monitors available data and will alert the proper authorities and public of potential hazardous conditions as needed. Gulf County's LMS was revised and adopted in 2005 and is currently being updated for 2009. The County staff's have faced numerous delays in updating the Floodplain Ordinance that was adopted in 1998. The updated ordinance was finally updated and adopted in April, 2009. The ordinance was approved by FEMA and is a necessary document to remain in the NFIP program. The Northwest Florida Water Management District will soon assume regulatory responsibility for stormwater permitting from DEP. The major change in permitting will require holding ponds instead of swells. Gulf County continues to address drainage issues through culvert permitting and by maintaining ditch and swell infrastructures. The county is proposing adding more culverts along CR 387 (Doc Whitfield Rd.) to flood water to disperse over a broader area instead of being directed to a focal point. This action should help reduce the flooding impacts to the Howard Creek area. Gulf County is also working with State and Federal agencies to reduce the impacts to SR 30E at the Stump Hole by hardening the rock berm that protects the roadway from the Gulf Of Mexico. The recently completed \$22 million beach re-nourishment project is a success and has received rave reviews for the improvements to landscape and protection from erosion.

F. Community Rating System (CRS)

Through the determination of BOCC to enforce the regulations that govern flood protection and the daily performance of their duties by staffs of the Planning Department, Building Department and GIS Department, the County maintains a Class 8 rating.

Should the BOCC or public have any questions concerning flood plain management, please contact the Planning Department staff. Should your question be beyond our knowledge, we will seek outside expertise to get an answer to your question.